

PROGRESS

IN

CIVIL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

JOHN A. HAZELWOOD

Secretary and Chief Examiner

Wisconsin Civil Service Commission

Issued by The
Wisconsin Civil Service Commission
1921

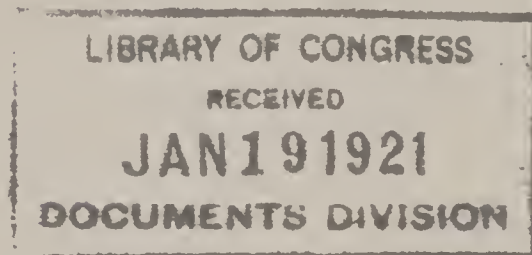
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

LEWIS G. KELLOGG, *President*

B. J. CASTLE

CAMERON FRASER

JOHN A. HAZELWOOD, *Secretary and*
Chief Examiner



5112355
A6
1924

PROGRESS IN CIVIL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

Efficiency in governmental activities rests largely today upon the work performed by civil service commissions. The establishment of sound civil service principles has been a history of difficult tasks and bitter struggles, but the advocates of efficiency in public service have worked on in spite of the opposition of the selfish and unscrupulous of all political parties. Civil service laws and ordinances have been passed and have finally won permanent places wherever good government prevails.

Representatives of civil service are interested in making the movement of the greatest possible help in the efficient management of public business. Such an effort will have not only the effect of increasing the efficiency of the various government activities but will also do much to spread the movement to other states, counties, and municipal governments. In other words, when the country at large sees that civil service commissions constitute a real and vital force in the improvement of public efficiency, then and only then will the principles upon which our work is founded be sought for and generally adopted.

COMPARISON WITH PRIVATE INDUSTRY

In many respects the administration of the civil service leads that of private service. Civil service examinations are to a large extent far ahead in their effectiveness of the method of selection, employed by private industrial concerns throughout the country. We must, however, admit that private industry is striding far ahead of civil service commissions in the matter of increasing and maintaining a high degree of business efficiency.

It is not necessary to detail the work being done by industrial concerns in providing training for those employees. The instances of training employees are numerous. Corporation schools very materially increase the efficiency of the organizations with which they are connected. It is along these lines that civil service has failed to keep abreast of the times. It is development in this direction, together with certain changes in our examination

system which promise in the near future to a more rapid and widespread establishment of the underlying principles of civil service.

Civil service commissions must realize that the time has come when their work is more than that of simply acting as employment agencies. We hear criticisms of the administration of civil service to the effect that the commissions are interested only in conducting academic examinations and then lose interest entirely in developing efficiency in those certified to the various departments.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Wisconsin established civil service on a broad and practical basis. After a trial of fifteen years in the state, we find officials, having appointments to make, in favor of retaining and extending civil service. Our commission takes the view that it has at least three important functions to perform, namely:

1. Examining candidates for state service.
2. Encouraging the proper training of those intending to enter public service and helping those in public service in increasing their efficiency and value to the service.
3. Furnishing information to the public on the activities of the commission, or, in other words, stimulating and arousing public opinion and sentiment in support of our policy summed up in our motto: "The Best Shall Serve the State."

We believe that if civil service commissions gave more attention to eliminating the academic from examinations, making them just as practical as possible, and then more actively and concretely showing interest in the work of employes in the service, many more friends would be won for the movement which we represent.

THE USE OF PRACTICAL METHODS

One reason why civil service commissions are criticised and condemned, especially by the practical man, is because they have employed the schoolboy and assembled competitive examinations indiscriminately in obtaining eligible lists for all types of employments. Gradually we are getting away from the idea that we need to treat applicants for important positions in public service as pupils in our schools.

In the minds of many leading merit principle men, there are no positions in public service that cannot, better be filled, as a general rule, by competitive examinations. The examination should be such, however, as to invite the best qualified men available. Many believe that persons may be examined and considered for positions in civil service without such persons having

made formal application, or in fact, without even knowing that their records and qualifications are being examined. Such is the policy employed by regents of universities and by trustees of colleges in building up their faculties.

A friend might make the application for the person thought to be well qualified for the service in question and the civil service commission could easily look into the person's qualifications and fitness for the position, put him on the eligible list, certify him to the appointing authority and then give notice to the man that he had been examined and was under consideration for appointment. The Wisconsin Civil Service Commission believes that this method is both feasible and practical in filling certain positions.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN STATE SERVICE

The Wisconsin Civil Service Commission has given much attention to the matter of training for public service. Private industries are more and more learning that it pays to educate and promote employes within their service. One reason why public service has not been inviting to the best is that hope and ambition which exist normally in all people, have not been stimulated. It is not enough to obtain men as servants of the public and then forget them and fill higher positions from outside the public service instead of promoting those already engaged in the service. Training for public service demands that civil service commissions be ever vigilant in helping to improve and to promote. Failure in carrying out this function of the civil service causes many good prospects to become discouraged and leave the public service for private service.

EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE

In carrying on training in public service there are three possibilities open to every civil service commission:

1. Securing the aid of educational institutions for personal instruction.
2. Making use of experts in the service for personal instruction.
3. Recommending correspondence courses for employes.

Wisconsin has utilized all of these means. We are fortunate in having the state university with its well organized extension division located where we have the largest number of state employes. Although our cooperation with the University Extension has been the most extensive, we believe that similar plans may be worked out with any local educational institution such as with high schools, continuation schools, normal schools, private schools, and colleges.

COURSES OFFERED TO STATE EMPLOYEES

The commission, with the cooperation of the university through its extension division, will offer to state employes the coming year a number of exceptionally profitable courses, several of which have been organized especially for the educational program carried on by this commission. Four classroom courses will be offered to employes of the capitol,—Effective Letter Writing, Filing and Indexing, Elementary Statistics, and Office Organization. These courses are built up on the actual needs of the various state departments, material actually gathered from the departments will be used as the basis for the classroom discussions.

The coming year a new group of courses are to be offered to the employes of the state institutions, especially arranged for matrons and teachers. The instructor in charge of these special courses of training will visit the institutions throughout the year, conferring with those who take the courses, and giving short talks to employes with the idea of stimulating greater interest among such employes in the work in which they are engaged. The courses which are to be offered along these lines are as follows: Child Nature and Training, Principles of Elementary Education, Training of Boys and Girls, Planning the Dietary, Health Course, Study of Fabrics, and Furnishings and Decorations.

OTHER COURSES OFFERED

It is the purpose of the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission to keep in close touch with the progress made by all employes in the state service, and to encourage the continuation of study suited to the development of the particular employes concerned.

The following courses have been selected because of their special bearing on the work of various groups of state employes. In all cases it will not be possible to offer this work to regularly organized classes. In cases where it is not, employes are urged to take the study through correspondence.

Practical Hand Firing	Steam Engines
Heat	Heating and Ventilation
Refrigeration	American Government and
Rural Highway Work	Politics
American Executives and Ex-	Practical Sociology
ecutive Methods	Free Hand Lettering
Criminology and Penology	Public Speaking
Steam Boilers	

Besides offering the regular courses above listed, the commission is on the lookout for opportunity to be of service to groups of employes in every way possible. As demand and need occurs,

special classes of employes are brought together for instruction along various lines. Under this provision, the commission has offered courses of training to janitors, service employes, and has conducted classes in practical dictation for stenographers to assist those already in the service in increasing their speed preparatory to accepting positions of a higher grade requiring ability to take dictation at a more rapid rate.

GROUP SCHOOL IDEA

The so-called group school idea has been developed in Wisconsin to perhaps a greater extent than in other states and the civil service commission has done all within its power to promote the idea. These schools are now held annually for power plant engineers, highway engineers, supervisors and patrolmen, income tax assessors, health officers, dairy and food inspectors and others. The idea back of this movement has been that of stimulation and the putting over of helpful ideas, methods of work, etc. These schools for the state employes have proved of marked value. Not only have the men gone back to their work again, after attending the schools, with greater intelligence and skill, but there has been created a most splendid esprit de corps and a feeling of closer relationship with the civil service commission and the heads of the departments.

Two years ago one of the courses arranged by this commission for state employes was that in public speaking conducted by a university professor. This course held in the capitol was arranged in order to give state employes who have occasion to address audiences on the work of their departments an opportunity to improve themselves along this line. The course was made just as practical as possible, a large number of the class being given a chance to take an active part at each meeting. The course was held during the session of the legislature and it is interesting to note that a considerable number of legislators joined the class and took an active part in its work, apparently thoroughly appreciating the privilege offered, enjoying the work and feeling that it was very much worth while.

WORKING FELLOWS

The Wisconsin Civil Service Commission has an arrangement with the University whereby graduate students of the right type may secure a half-time employment in the departments of the capitol, working on special problems assigned to them and receiving a fixed compensation for their work. They are given credit by the University toward graduation for the work they do. This furnishes a real opportunity for getting in touch with high grade

prospective government employes and for stimulating the idea of definite training for public service.

The same idea has also been carried out for several years in connection with students in the commercial departments of the high school and city continuation schools. Students whom the heads of the department could recommend have been assigned by this commission to different departments for periods of two weeks, putting in half days. They give their services as typists and stenographers in return for the knowledge this work gives them of actual office procedure. A very large number of students have taken advantage of this arrangement. It also serves to furnish the civil service commission with more definite and reliable information bearing on the efficiency of these young people and their fitness for state service.

ORGANIZATION OF EMPLOYES

The public should be as near an ideal employer as conditions will permit, that is, it should provide the employe with proper working conditions, reasonable working hours, adequate salaries and dependable opportunity of promotion. Governments are probably further from being model employers today insofar as salary conditions are concerned than ever before, due mainly to the rapid increase in the cost of living and lack of flexibility of governments in making changes in service expenditures. The plain fact is that states and municipalities left to themselves have little inclination to alter for the better many conditions under which civil employes work.

In many respects the civil service commissions can furnish to employes what trade unions are expected to furnish for their members, that is, help in the securing of rights, encouragement in self direction and the obtaining of adequate chances for promotion and increases in salaries, things which contribute very largely to the development and maintenance of a proper attitude toward work on the part of employes.

We know that employing authorities in public service are subject to the same weakness that are employing authorities in industrial concerns. Many heads of departments lack knowledge of what are proper working conditions for employes and what proper salaries should be. Many department heads who have the knowledge lack the vision, and what is still more lamentable, many who have the knowledge and the vision fail to possess the courage to put across the proper programs for employment. Here then is a field in which the civil service commissions with sufficient backbone may function in improving to a very material degree the conditions under which employes work.

ESSAY CONTEST

The commission continues from year to year the essay contest for pupils of the state high schools. This contest is popular among the high school students of the state, and has a beneficial effect in increasing interest and discussion of the problems of civil service administration. The Federated Women's Clubs of the state have during the past biennial period taken an active interest in this contest, and through their efforts local organizations have assisted materially in stimulating competition in their local high schools. First place was won this year by the Reedsburg High School. The secretary of the commission attended the graduation exercises, at which time the cup was presented in behalf of the Civil Service Commission and the State Civil Service League to Mr. Aloysius Thiemann, whose essay brought the honor to the Reedsburg High School.

The Wisconsin Civil Service Commission thoroughly believes that it is impossible for it to fulfill its functions as an employment and personnel agency in the state government without keeping in very close touch with the needs of the service. To this end, the commission has adopted the policy of making frequent visits to the institutions and departments of the state. During the past two years a number of the commission's meetings have been held at the various state institutions. At these times the commission has gone over carefully with the head of the institution his particular needs, the service rendered by employees certified from the civil service lists, together with suggestions for the possible improvement of the service through a more intelligent selection and training of its personnel.

The Service Examiner, who has charge of the records of all employees within the service and of the educational work conducted by the commission, keeps in close touch with the various state and university departments, together with the institutions. Frequent visits and talks with department heads and employees help to keep the commission in sensitive touch with the general tone of the personnel, the needs of the departments, and the many helpful suggestions which come from the appointing officers of the service.

The commission considers itself as an agency of cooperation, an agency with the same interest in public service efficiency as the heads of the departments and institutions comprising the state government. It considers that it should proceed with a sympathetic understanding of the needs and plans for growth of the departments, assisting in every way possible to bring about the highest degree of efficiency so far as quality and effectiveness of personnel are concerned.

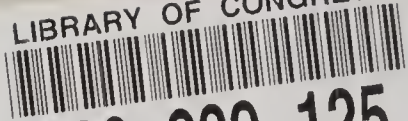
ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

The following schools have been represented in the contest during the past four years:

Algoma	THE TROPHY CUP	North Freedom
Almond	has been	Oconomowoc
Altoona		Oconto
Arena	won by the following schools:	Onalaska
Athens	1918—Wauwatosa High School	Oshkosh
Barron	1919—Monroe High School	Pardeeville
Beaver Dam	1920—Reedsburg High School	Park Falls
Bloomington		Peshtigo
Butternut	Kiel	Plainfield
Cambridge	La Crosse	Prairie du Chien
Cashton	Ladysmith	Prescott
Cassville	Lake Mills	Princeton
Chilton	Laona	Random Lake
Chippewa Falls	Leon	Reedsburg
Cleveland	Linden	Rib Lake
Clintonville	Loyal	Richland Center
Coleman	Madison	Rock Elm
Crandon	Manitowoc	Rosendale
Dodgeville	Mattoon	Sauk City
Eden	Marinette	Shawano
Edgerton	Marshfield	Sheboygan
Elmwood	Menomonie	Shell Lake
Fall Creek	Menomonee Falls	Spooner
Fond du Lac	Mellen	Stevens Point
Fox Lake	Menasha	Stockbridge
Galesville	Middleton	Tomah
Genoa Junction	Milwaukee, N. Div.	Two Rivers
Gilman	Milwaukee, S. Div.	Turtle Lake
Glenbeulah	Milwaukee, W. Div.	Waterford
Green Lake	Milwaukee, Wash.	Watertown
Hayward	Mondovi	Waupaca
Horicon	Montfort	Wauwatosa
Iola	Mt. Horeb	Whitewater
Jefferson	Mountain	Wild Rose
Kenosha	Neenah	Williams Bay
Kewaunee	Neillsville	Winneconne

The Civil Service Commission furnishes to each school entered, material to be consulted by contestants.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 033 239 125 2